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SOUTHERN WOMEN  
AND  
RACIAL ADJUSTMENT

BY

L. H. HAMMOND

AUTHOR OF

IN BLACK AND WHITE: AN INTERPRETATION  
OF SOUTHERN LIFE; IN THE GARDEN  
OF DELIGHT; ETC.

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1917



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### NOTE.

In this paper Mrs. Hammond has told what the white women of the South have done and are doing for the unprivileged black women. It is a splendid story of gallant service. Its sanity and patriotism make their own high appeal.

JAMES H. DILLARD.

Charlottesville, Va.

October 15, 1917.

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### NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.

For the opinions expressed and the conclusions drawn in the following pages the writer alone is responsible; but she wishes to acknowledge her indebtedness to the following women, without whose kindly aid in gathering the facts set forth this paper could scarcely have been written:

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L. H. HAMMOND.

Dalton, Ga.

October 1, 1917.



And here to us the eternal charge is given  
To rise and make our low world touch God's high.

*Alfred Noyes: "In Time of War."*

## **SOUTHERN WOMEN AND RACIAL ADJUSTMENT.**

The manners and morals of every community reflect the standards sanctioned or permitted by its privileged women. Individuals stand above this common level, blazing ethical trails into the unmoral wilderness of our wider human associations, and draw after them, here and there, adventurous groups; but there can be no mass advance until the individual impulse toward righteousness, which is justice in its finest sense, is reinforced by a common standard embodying a force greater than the individual.

These common standards are furnished, actively or passively, by the privileged women, from whose homes they spread into the community. Racial adjustment, like many other moral issues, waits on the leadership of these women. Their attitude toward it is thus of both sectional and national importance; and their increasing development of broad humanitarian standards in racial relations is worthy of note.

### **New Thoughts for New Times.**

One great obstacle to better racial adjustment has been the retention by many of us of the viewpoint of a day that is past: our ideal of a good free Negro has been too much like the one that fitted a good slave. Every misfit action has a misfit ideal at its root; and our anomalous crop of racial relations, with its fruitage of lynchings and migrations, is the result of trying to grow the Negro's life to-day on past ideals. Usefulness to his master is a slave's chief virtue; that of a freeman is his usefulness to the human race. However undeveloped or ignorant he may be, the standard of value is shifted at once from an economic to a moral base; and the foundation of all morality is the home. Material progress waits on moral progress; and the full prosperity of Southern industry and commerce waits in a most vital sense upon the moral status of the Negro home. It is the privileged white women who

alone can fix this status for the entire community, building it up in white respect, and helping the better class of colored women to build it up in colored life.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to show our women's entrance upon this great humanitarian and patriotic service. To perform it they are adventuring into the unknown, discovering their cooks and washerwomen as women beset by womanhood's clamorous demands and utterly unable to meet them without help and sympathy. It is out of this thought of privileged white women for these handicapped mothers, children, and homes that the eventual adjustment of our bi-racial Southern life will come.

### **Beginnings.**

All women's modern activities began in individualistic religious service. The old Dorcas and missionary societies first widened their horizon to include conditions beyond their homes, and taught them teamwork; which overflowed, in time, into the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the early cultural clubs, and the Federation. The interest of Southern women in the welfare of "free people of color" follows this line of development.

Their first service to the freed Negroes was purely religious and individual. In a number of states colored Sunday schools were taught here and there by women of the first families. The Episcopal Bishop of South Carolina reports plantation Sunday schools conducted by such women which run back from forty to sixty years without a break. In the darkest days of the last century these scattered schools kept alive a sense of the responsibility of the privileged woman to the unprivileged.

### **The Woman's Christian Temperance Union.**

Through this body Southern women took their first steps in organized service. Work among Negroes was decided on at a meeting in Chattanooga in 1871. A prominent South

Carolinian, as superintendent of Colored Work, spoke to and for the Negroes throughout the South. From that time the policy of the Southern state organizations has been to promote temperance work among Negroes as part of each local union's duty. Although this has never been thoroughly carried out, and many women are indifferent, in this as in every group, to Negro welfare and to the interdependence of their good and ours, yet few could be found who would oppose the policy. In all local campaigns the Negroes are included. Some of the Union's most noted speakers are Southern women, and in the South they never speak without some strong word for the Negro, and especially for the Negro woman. A place for colored people is almost invariably reserved at the white meetings; and, when time permits, the speakers address colored gatherings, to which they are accompanied by local white leaders.

When Atlanta went dry in 1885 the white women held prayer-meetings with the colored women throughout the city; and it was publicly acknowledged that the colored women, backed by their pastors, had contributed largely to the victory. In the worst days of our convict camps the Georgia Union led and won a fight for the segregation and protection of the women prisoners. The treatment of colored women in the camps was the avowed cause of this campaign.

The attitude of the Unions has had far-reaching effects. Their viewpoint has been more humanitarian than racial, and almost unconsciously they have carried into thousands of communities a latent thought of the common human needs of white and black. This thought, in the last fifteen years, is growing in the organized church work of Southern women, and has been carried by the church women into the wider associations of their Federation community work.

### **Southern Methodist Women.**

The first organized body of church women to take up work for colored people was the Southern Methodist Home Mission

Society, now merged with the Foreign Society in the Women's Missionary Council of that church. In 1900 they decided to open an industrial department for girls in the school at Augusta, Ga., maintained by their church for the training of colored ministers and teachers. The work met with strong opposition at first, but has won its way to general respect and support, as is evidenced by its increasing development. The Council now operates, in addition to this industrial work, two settlements, one at Augusta, the other at Nashville, Tenn. In both places the Board of Directors is made up of locally prominent men and women of both races. The aim is community betterment, and care is taken to interest the better class of colored people without regard to denominational lines. The older students of the colored normal schools and colleges assist regularly in the club and class work, gaining a measure of training in community work which will bear fruit in their home communities.

The Nashville enterprise has taken on unusual significance, having interested people of both races of all denominations, the Southern white schools, and the colleges for Negroes maintained by Northern people. Courses in Social Service are offered at Fisk University, the field work being done at the settlement under the direction of Southern white women. The National League on Urban Conditions Among Colored People coöperates by maintaining scholarships for these courses at Fisk, which are open to graduates of all colored schools of a certain grade in the South. Vanderbilt University not only furnishes lecturers to these students from its faculty, but students enrolled in the Vanderbilt School of Religion and Philanthropy help in the work of the settlement, thus learning the needs of the colored poor. These initial steps in establishing contact and understanding have already had good results. A Public Welfare League, composed of men and women of both races, is in operation. Its program includes the promotion of a better understanding between the races, the improvement of housing and working conditions

for Negroes, and the training of students in methods of community betterment and of race coöperation. This last item is of especial importance, Nashville being to an unusual extent a school center for both races. Among the things already achieved by the Public Welfare League are a public library for Negroes, the organization of probation work for colored juvenile offenders, and two playgrounds for colored children, the city furnishing equipment and salaries, and students trained at Fisk and in the settlement acting as supervisors. A further development of this coöperative spirit was seen after the great fire of 1916, when the white Commercial Club and the Negro Board of Trade worked together in relieving some 1,500 colored fire sufferers.

#### **Local Work of Southern Methodist Women.**

The undertakings above described are under the immediate care of the women's central missionary organization; but additional work for the 4,700 local auxiliaries has been outlined by the Council. It includes service in colored Sunday schools, promotion of colored missionary societies, school betterment, recreational facilities, and especially the formation of and coöperation with colored women's Community Clubs for betterment along all lines. In the fall of 1915 over 200 auxiliaries were regularly reporting such work. Its effect on public opinion is illustrated by the experience of the superintendent of Social Service for the Louisiana Conference.

"I have changed my views about the Negroes greatly in the last few years," she said recently. "Our Council has educated me; and I think many others feel the same way. A number of our Louisiana societies are working for colored people."

An initial point of contact established, growth in sympathy is certain. Handicapped motherhood and childhood of any race make to privileged women an appeal which is irresistible once it is understood. The women of the North Georgia Conference recently illustrated this fact.

This body has shown by conference action from time to time a broadening sense of obligation to the Negroes; but at the 1917 meeting their growing insight was focused on a wrong which stirs women for women everywhere.

The perennial petition to the next legislature to raise the age of consent from ten to eighteen years was up for its annual endorsement here, as at every gathering of women in the State. This year the W. C. T. U. was leading the fight. In their communication to the Methodist women they referred to the fact that certain legislators had openly objected to the protection the bill would afford colored girls. The W. C. T. U. regarded this an added reason for the bill's passage, and the Methodist women unanimously adopted a resolution calling for "the protection of the childhood and womanhood of Georgia without regard to race." Other bodies of women took the same stand and will keep it until the bill is passed.

### **Southern Presbyterian Women.**

These women lead the South in Sunday-school work among Negroes. Some of them have been teaching in colored Sunday schools ever since the war, and of late years the work is spreading. The first wife of President Wilson told the writer that when, as a young girl, she went to New York to study art she sought out a colored Sunday school and taught a class there the two years she was in the city. She said that if she had come from any section but the South she would have taken some other form of church work; but, being a Southern girl, the daughter and descendant of slave owners, she felt that service to colored people was her especial obligation; and, true to Presbyterian type, she sought a Sunday-school class.

Of late years, however, these women are leading interdenominational organizations of church women in several cities for this and other purposes. The Federation of City Missionary Societies at Meridian, Miss., is typical.

The Presbyterian women led in forming the Federation, which organized an interdenominational Bible Teachers' Training Class from the various colored Sunday schools. It meets weekly in the colored public library with the best white teachers of the city in charge. Then came a Story Tellers' League of the colored teachers. It, too, meets weekly at the library, a white woman telling a story to be repeated by the members at the colored schools. The monthly stereopticon lectures of the Missionary Education Movement are repeated before the colored people; and on one night of Christmas week the Negroes hold a musical service around the municipal Christmas tree.

In Uniontown, Ala., the women of a Presbyterian Bible Class decided to set apart a definite hour each week when each of them would teach the servants in her home the Sunday-school lesson for the next week. This was ten years ago. The basal need in racial adjustment—a human as distinguished from an economic point of contact—being thus met, vision and a broadening service have followed. An interdenominational Bible Class for colored women was formed, officered by colored women and taught by white. Class committees were formed to read the Bible to the colored sick and aged. This brought forward various problems of poverty, and led to relief work guided by the white women and done by the Negro. The children of these homes came into view, and a white teacher maintains for them a weekly story hour.

### **Institute for Colored Women.**

A significant development from this widely scattered local work is the inauguration, a year or two ago, of a yearly Institute for Colored Women by the Southern Presbyterian Women's Home Mission Board. It is held at Stillman Institute, Tuscaloosa, Ala., the church training school for colored Presbyterian ministers. In 1916 there were 155 women in attendance from six states. Leading white women were present from the Board, as well as from Alabama and other



states. The courses were given in part by them and in part by colored women. They included Bible study, and lectures on moral training in the home, the home and the school, practical home-making, care of babies, common diseases, sanitation, preservation of food, etc.

A combination of the Methodist Community Clubs conducted by local auxiliaries with a multiplication of such yearly institutes by the general organizations seems an ideal plan for missionary societies to adopt. Both forms of service are closely fitted to the needs of both races; for the rendering of service by those who can give it is as vital to moral health as is the receiving of it by those who need.

### **Southern Baptist Women.**

The Baptist Women's Board has no specific enterprise for colored people. They definitely teach, however, through their literature, the duty of local Christian service. This chiefly takes the form of helping the colored Baptist women to form and conduct missionary societies. This practice is widespread. The Home Mission Board has a Department of Personal Service which officially includes work for Negroes; and in several places the coöperation in missionary work above referred to is leading out into the field of social service, especially in those interdenominational missionary federations which are appearing in many of our cities.

A fine instance of local social service was found in Baltimore, where the Baptist women for years carried on a number of industrial schools for colored children. Through the children the mothers were reached, and a strong colored leadership was eventually developed which warranted turning over the work to these women, who have since conducted it.

In Texas a number of auxiliaries are doing work among colored people. In Belton the white college girls, enlisted by the Baptist women, gave a fine missionary program recently in one of the colored churches. In the annual State meetings of the white societies the officers of colored Baptist schools



regularly present their work, and a collection is taken for them. In Austin courses in Bible study are given for colored women.

A remarkably successful coöperative work is carried on in Birmingham, Ala., under the leadership of two white missionaries of the Northern Baptist Women's Board. These women have not only a present enrollment of over 700 colored women in their four-year Bible course, but they have enlisted the white women of the city as teachers of these classes. Every denomination is represented, and the teachers have the backing of their local missionary organizations.

### **Episcopal Women.**

The work of the women of the Episcopal Church is on a different basis from that of all other churches. It is purely auxiliary to the General Board of Missions, which determines the activities of the women, appropriates the funds raised by them, and is composed entirely of men. This explains their lack of initiative in church work—a lack not found in their Y. W. C. A. or their club work. As church members, however, their directed activities include the work for Negroes maintained by the General Board. This work is larger and better supported by the Southern dioceses than the work for Negroes of any other Southern church, and in this the women have their share. They also share in the local work of the parishes for Negroes, which is chiefly the maintenance of parish schools; and where, as in the diocese of South Georgia, the church employs a trained colored woman for work among her people they give both interest and money to the work. In Tennessee the Bishop has organized a Bishop's Guild among the women for the sole purpose of promoting the educational work of the diocese for Negroes.

The colored women of the dioceses are organized, like the white women, into auxiliaries of the Board of Missions; and the diocesan officers of the white organizations not only attend the annual meetings of the colored women, but assist them

throughout the year in their work. In the main, however, the social service activities of these women, as of the women of other denominations, find their largest expression outside of their church organization.

### **Y. W. C. A. Work Among Colored Women.**

It seems well to consider this phase of the subject in connection with church work, though it is more recently begun than the club work. For years the only Y. W. C. A. work among Negroes was done from the New York headquarters by a colored secretary in charge of the colored schools. There are now 51 associations in as many schools, and interest is aroused in 50 more. The feeling, however, has been growing among Southern workers that the time has come for coöperative work, and in the fall of 1915 it was decided on at a conference held in Louisville in which women of both races and of both sections took part. A joint committee of Southern white and colored women was formed both to promote the interests of the college associations and to encourage the formation of city associations, independent, and yet linked as "branch associations" to the central white organization of their respective cities, to which they could look for guidance and coöperation, after the plan found successful in the work for immigrant races in the North. Associations are already in operation in Richmond, Charlotte, and St. Louis, and a number of cities have made application for organization, a necessary feature of the application being the endorsement of the local white association. Jacksonville, Fla., Winston-Salem and Wilmington, N. C., and Lynchburg, Va., are among the cities applying for organization.

Colored student conferences are now held annually in the South, attended by Southern white women. The most promising students are given six weeks' intensive training in the summer at New York headquarters to prepare them for future secretarial work among their people. Conferences are

also held on city work, and here both races and both sections are brought together, and a broader basis is being laid for mutual understanding.

### **Southern Club Women.**

The facts already recited show Southern women shifting the race problem from a sectional to a human basis, and broadening their adjustment to those Christian standards which fit the whole Race of Man. They are opening the doors of our sectional life to the free winds of world-thought by opening our hearts to the needs of all human life. When one's heart is open to human needs the life of the world flows into it. The smallest, most secluded dwelling place, the daily round of pettiest tasks, is then filled with the throb of a common aspiration, the love of a common justice, the thrill of a universal hope. This liberty of soul our women are achieving for us. Like all the priceless things of life, it lies close to everybody's hand, inextricably tangled in our everyday relations and living. What we need are eyes to see it—a standard of values made visible from the unseen. And this it is the office of women to give.

Their initial inspiration has come from the churches and church teaching, but it is working out, in the main, through organizations outside the church. The beginnings of fifty years ago gathered strength in the W. C. T. U., the first association of women in the South for bettering home conditions. In like manner the social service development of recent years germinated in the church, and there passed its first critical stage; but its flowering is outside the church, as its fullest fruition will be. The church women have created outside of their churches a free, flexible organization to which nothing that concerns human life is alien, and where denominational and class lines do not exist. And here, with the Christian inspiration drawn from their churches, they are, half unconsciously as yet, approaching our old sectional problems from

the human, or world, standpoint. The results are already impressive; their implications are greater still.

### **The Democracy of the Microbe.**

Any one who will follow common sense far enough will land up to their eyes in Christianity; the two refuse to accept divorcement. The club women came upon Christian principles of racial adjustment without realizing that they were dealing with racial problems at all. They simply started out with common sense as their guide and cleanliness as their goal.

Their clean-up campaigns, confined at first to the white part of town, were pronounced by common sense to be only fifty per cent efficient; so the coöperation of colored women was sought. The club of Charlotte, N. C., was one of the pioneers—and less than a decade ago. They invited the women of the colored missionary societies to a meeting at which the mayor, the health officer, the white and the colored women all spoke; and the result, attested to by the club president, was that the white women were put on their mettle to keep up with the colored ones in the cleaning that followed. The city's health record and the babies flourished in consequence.

In this way, in several pioneer towns, a common meeting ground was discovered for the women of the two races—the need of human homes for cleanliness and health. The meeting of human needs never endangers the preservation of true racial lines; this the women clearly sensed, and went to their new work joyously. Common sense, prodded by the microbe, had prompted the first step; but some of the women glimpsed a background of religious teaching and motive with which the experiment fitted in, and from which it drew high sanction.

In a few years this coöperation for community health has spread throughout the South, leavening popular thought with a consciousness of a common need, which must be met for

both races or for neither. And while that heaven works the women have been making further discoveries.

### **The Negro Home.**

In a Georgia city a clean-up committee, going to their work-section, passed through a section in charge of colored women. There had been heavy rains, and the committee beheld several blocks of colored houses standing in a great pool of stagnant and slimy water. Inquiry showed that the city Board of Health had long since reported the need of a sewer there, and the Council had voted to put it in "as soon as funds were available." The cost would run into the thousands, and the city needed many things.

But to the club women a new thought came as they watched the colored children playing in that filth, and the mothers plodding in the marsh of their little yards—a thought, not of Negro houses, but of Negro homes. It is a big club, with wealth and prestige, and when it reinforced the request of the Board of Health, as it promptly did, the sewer went in, and a rankling bitterness went out of a number of Negro hearts.

Again, some club women, two or three years ago, as a result of one of these clean-up campaigns, began to visit occasionally a colored Mothers' Club to talk about some of the problems common to all mothers. Thus they learned that in the hitherto respectable section in which most of these women lived three houses of vice had been opened, all owned by white men, though one was run by a colored woman. They had made short work of her case after a fashion of their own: she had simply developed an insuperable objection to the neighborhood, and had forced her employer to let her move. But against the white women they were helpless. An appeal to the police would have closed the houses in that city, but they feared the vengeance of the proprietors and their women—a thing the police could take no cognizance of until it became an accomplished fact. Most of them owned, or were buying, their homes: they could not leave, or risk being burned out.

The club's Department of Civics took the matter up at once, and without involving the colored women. The houses were closed, and the sense of the common needs of human homes was broadened in that community.

The same result, in another city, came through the failure of a similar effort. A club committee on housing inspected a district including some colored homes. They ran across a colored woman of the finest type who was leading a little group of her friends in some home mission work among these Negro poor. She was handicapped by a vice resort owned by a white man and kept by a Negro woman who preyed upon the girls of the neighborhood.

The bond of a common womanhood, deeper than all racial separateness, asserted itself, as it will when such an emergency is understood. The club women declared war on that house for the sake of colored mothers and homes. The man, however, had brains, money, and power; he still holds nine points of the law. But he has taught those women some truths about the needs of colored homes which will bear fruit in that community long after he is forgotten. He has also prolonged from acquaintance into friendship the contact between educated women of the two races who made common cause against a common foe.

### **The Educated Colored Woman.**

This discovery of the educated colored woman is of deep significance. It is she who must lift her people, but she can do so little without our help! The experience of one club woman is typical here. She seized upon a friend in the street one day to share her recent discovery.

"You know I'm on the committee to meet the colored teachers in the clean-up campaign," she began. "—— is the chairman of their committee"—naming the head of a local school. "You know she's a college graduate; I've heard about her for years. I thought she'd be a sort of spoiled cook, you know—forward, and all that. Well, she's perfectly *fine*!

I didn't know there were any Negroes like that. That committee will work like it was greased. It means everything to the Negroes—and a lot to us, too—to have a woman like that at work among all these colored people here."

Her face was alight with the interest of her discovery—a feeling a number of women are coming to understand as they make similar discoveries in their own communities. Said the president of a city federation in Mississippi lately:

"I had such a sense of adventure when I first began to get acquainted with those women here. You know we couldn't even get the poorer Negroes to clean up except through these educated ones. The first time I went to talk to them about it you can't think how rattled I was. I'd been speaking in public for years, and never thought about being embarrassed. But they looked so different from any Negroes I'd known. I didn't know what their thoughts were like, or how to get at them. I've done some mental gymnastics since, and I trust I'm a broader woman for it."

The outstanding feature of her experience, however, and that of many others, was the finding, in these uncharted regions, the same old landmarks of human need. They are common to all races and all time, and a realization of this fact is one of the things which is helping us to broaden out of a sectional into a world life.

### **White and Black in Baltimore.**

So far as the writer can learn, coöperation in Baltimore has developed further than in any other city. For this reason a somewhat detailed account seems advisable.

In 1911 the Women's Civic League appointed an Advisory Committee on Work for Colored People. A fund of \$1,000 was raised, and a trained colored woman secured who was a graduate of Hampton and a student at the New York School of Philanthropy. She was made "executive secretary" for the white Advisory Committee, and under its direction organ-



ized the colored women into the "Coöperative Civic League," of which she became president, while remaining as executive secretary of the Advisory Committee.

The work was opened in a house the colored women undertook to buy, the white women paying the worker's salary and other expenses. A day nursery was opened which the latest report shows still in successful operation. The mothers, all of whom work away from home, pay a small fee which covers the cost of food. Investigations by the colored worker showed many mothers of school children in the neighborhood who had "to lock their doors in the morning only to reopen them at night." The Advisory Committee secured permission from the Board of Education to have lunches served in the schools. This is done at a charge of two cents per child per day, the Committee meeting the deficit.

The following activities are regularly maintained: settlement work, with clubs, classes, etc.; back-yard and vacant-lot gardening; flower market; distribution of seed; "a series of meetings annually, spreading the gospel of civic betterment; the organization of the school children into Clean City Clubs; and, withal, a wholesome spirit of mutual helpfulness."

The agencies coöperating with this movement to meet the human needs of the community without distinction of race make an impressive list: the Federated Charities, Children's Aid, Visiting Nurses, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Juvenile Court, Parole Board, Board of Health, Babies' Milk Fund, and the Associations for Summer Outings and on School Attendance. The Civic League has also taken an active interest in the movement for better housing for colored people, in which city officials and leading citizens are now interested. A club member is on the city committee now formulating plans for sanitary houses in the poorer Negro quarters, and another member has erected in one of these sections a small group of sanitary houses as an investment, and also as a demonstration.



A member of the Civic League's Advisory Committee writes:

"The day nursery is for us just the opening point of contact with the colored women, who had the idea for a long time of having such an institution. They are primarily responsible for the nursery and its upkeep, while the Advisory Board is responsible for the more general social work. The committee of white women meets first separately, and then with the committee of colored women, and our general work has been without friction. . . . We have felt that there should be a guiding hand with them, and I think the colored women realize that we are very deeply interested in the welfare of their race."

The white committee raises \$1,100 annually for the work. Among the activities promoted are a class of forty-one organized "for the study and practice of social service"; a playground; an athletic league; and work for better health conditions among colored people, done in coöperation with the medical faculty of Johns Hopkins. The Committee also acts, by request, in an advisory capacity to the Home for Friendless Colored Children, and has been before the State legislature to secure suitable appropriations for it.

The response of the colored women to the club women is noteworthy. The colored teachers are active in the school-lunch work. Fifteen volunteer colored workers teach the classes in industries. An independent colored club in another part of the city is developing similar work and coöperates with the Advisory Committee.

### **Club Work in Many States.**

The briefest summary of Southern club work for Negroes is impressive. Even though in some states little is yet done, the trend is unmistakable. Clean-up coöperation spreads everywhere. In many cities Baby Week includes days for

colored folk. In Florida and Mississippi fine health work is being done. The president of the Mississippi Federation writes:

"The Federated Club women of Mississippi are organizing the Negro women in Civic Clubs and are passing on their literature and helps to them. They are of the greatest help in the City Beautiful campaigns. . . . Frequently the club women go to the Negro schools and give health talks. The Negro is helping us, through the Civic Clubs, to fight tuberculosis, typhoid, etc. We find in every community an intelligent Negro woman to act as a leader for her people. One club, in its paper, gives space to the activities of its colored Civic League. We have found wherever we have a Negro club there is uplift and a reaching out for more knowledge in sanitation and health."

This State Federation conducts yearly a State-wide "cleanest town" contest in coöperation with the State Board of Health, and the women make special mention of the help given by the colored clubs. The extension of this coöperative health work to the rural districts is planned by this vigorous Federation for the immediate future.

In Arkansas the State president reports the club women active in the organization and promotion of colored clubs. Coöperation in sanitation is general, and health conditions among colored people are improving. The State Federation supports a colored farm demonstrator and a colored woman to organize canning clubs. These two have general supervision in ten "black" counties, the local white club women finding in each county a colored woman to coöperate with these supervisors. The leading women of the Federation speak to colored audiences, and as an organization they are helping the Negroes of Arkansas to better health and living conditions.

The State president of Georgia reported at the last biennial that the moonlight schools, encouraged by the club women,

hoped to eradicate illiteracy among both races by 1920. Baby Week is commonly observed for both races. This Federation maintains an organizer to form Junior Civic Leagues in the public schools. She goes to schools of both races, and over 2,000 colored children were enrolled at the last biennial. The children's pledge covers clean speech, loyalty to country, personal and neighborhood cleanliness, kindness, and respect for the rights of others. Instruction in sanitation and hygiene is given.

In Virginia the Civics and Health Departments of the clubs are giving much attention to health and civic improvement work among colored people. They are also stressing the need for a medical inspection of schools to include those for colored children. Here, as in all the states, it grows more common to include the colored people in the prizes offered for the best gardens and back yards. The probation work in Virginia is not, so far as I can learn, connected with the clubs; but club women are members of the probation associations in various towns; and the State Board of Charities and Correction reports coöperative work in a number of cities where colored volunteer probation officers look after delinquent colored children. Individual white club women, too, have contributed generously to the reformatory for colored girls enterprised by the colored women's State Association and jointly supported by them and by the State. The Board of Trust of this institution is composed of men and women of both races, these club women among them.

The Federation of the District of Columbia promotes health work for both races, a colored doctor being asked to serve with the Baby Week campaign committee.

Florida is active in health work for colored people. In Jacksonville they have secured two public colored nurses for them, and also two district nurses. Prizes for improvement, home gardens, etc., are given by several clubs; Baby Week is widely observed for both races; and an effort is being made to open in Jacksonville, with State Federation backing, a domestic science school for colored women.

The broadening interest of the Alabama club women began in an investigation made some years ago by the then president of the State Federation into the criminal statistics of the State. This investigation was undertaken at the request of a State officer, and was a revelation to her in regard to Negro criminality. She had never been especially interested in colored people before, she said, except in those individuals known to her; but she saw, from these records, that something was radically wrong in Negro life, and set herself to find out what it was. She first investigated the schools, which, she felt, explained much; and from them she was led, step by step, into a further study of colored life. Her outspoken sympathy, her understanding, and her service have had, and are still having, wide results.

#### **Some Work of Local Clubs.**

A few typical instances of work done by local clubs must suffice.

Last year the Atlanta club women conducted a cooking school for colored women and girls which had an attendance of 800. They announced it as intended primarily for colored home-makers, and not for the purpose of furnishing cooks for white homes.

In Augusta the Social Service Department of the city Federation secured the improvement of the county reformatory, occupied almost entirely by colored children, and has taken up the cause of the youthful delinquent regardless of race. This club is working for municipal playgrounds for both races; and in clean-up and temperance campaigns, as well as in welfare work after the great fire of 1916, they have shown a broad grasp of the underlying needs common to all classes and races.

Louisville clubs maintain penny lunches at five white schools and one colored school.

The club women of Birmingham eight years ago investigated the worst colored slum of the city, and so roused the

people in regard to conditions, and the consequent terrible human waste, that a \$60,000 industrial school was erected there, which has, according to the city superintendent of schools, transformed the entire neighborhood. The club women are in touch with the head of this school, who serves as a medium of communication between the best people of both races. The club women arrange for talks in the school by doctors and nurses on the care of children, sanitation, etc.

In Jackson, Miss., coöperation has spread from clean-up campaigns into Baby Week, prize garden contests, etc. The colored Civic League, led, according to the testimony of white club women, by a colored woman of exceptionally fine type, coöperates with the white club in all matters of health and civic betterment. The white club employs a white visiting nurse, who serves the homes of both races. When a cyclone destroyed a Negro section of the city this nurse was established in a tent among the stricken people, and gave her entire time to them until their suffering was remedied.

In Memphis prominent club women are on the Advisory Board of a colored Industrial Settlement Home enterprised by a big-hearted colored woman for the poor of her people. To assist in raising the funds needed they arranged a concert by the Fisk Jubilee singers at a colored auditorium, advertised for white patronage, and announced their own intention of being present. A large audience of both races resulted, as well as wide publicity for the excellent work of the settlement.

### **Work of Colored Club Women.**

The above instances are sufficient to indicate the importance of organized white women as a factor in racial adjustment; but what of organized colored women, the other factor necessary to success?

Over 50,000 of them are enrolled in their National Association. They have organizations in thirty states, including all those of the South; and at one of their biennials the writer heard two addresses which for clearness, restrained and force-

ful speech, and a moral passion rising to heights of genuine eloquence, would have done credit to speakers of any race. The Association publishes a small monthly magazine, edited from Tuskegee by Mrs. Booker T. Washington. It shows these women taking their part in women's world-fight against vice, disease, and injustice; struggling for better health conditions, for home and school improvement, care of children, and all the fundamental interests of women, to whatever race they may belong.

These clubs maintain homes for orphans, old folks, outcast women, working girls; and friendly shelters, day nurseries, and missions. The Teachers' Leagues maintain mothers' clubs, and classes in sewing and domestic science. Work is done for colored hospitals. In Virginia and Missouri the State Associations have secured reform schools for colored girls. In Virginia the organization bought the farm for the school, paying \$5,000 cash, and pays about one-third of the yearly expense. The State, with generous assistance from individual white club women, erected the buildings, and pays two-thirds of the running expenses.

The Kentucky State Association has raised in two years \$3,000 for improving schoolhouses and helping poor children. South Carolina clubs have in the same time given \$1,100 for the same purposes, and over \$3,000 for civic and uplift work.

The National Association has a Department of Rural Work, with headquarters at Frankfort, Ky. The chairman has enrolled in her own State, in the last two years, 6,000 women in 670 rural clubs and 362 school leagues. These country women have in that time raised \$2,000 for their club work. Yet only 15 of these 670 clubs have joined the national organization.

### **An Opportunity.**

This last fact reveals one of the greatest opportunities of our white clubs for a social service to which our whole nation

would be indebted—the opportunity to help these struggling, scattered, handicapped women in their efforts to lift the standards of their people's homes.

Few of the colored clubs can afford affiliation with their national or state organizations. Many of them, doubtless, do not yet see the need for wider association; they simply try to minister, in a more or less haphazard fashion, to local needs for which their slender resources are pitifully inadequate. But undoubtedly delegates' expenses and dues to the larger associations are beyond the means of most of them, and so they not only miss the direction and inspiration of contact with their best women, but, missing it, work blindly, their spirit of service often misdirected to ineffectual ends. When their race so suffers for service this waste is genuinely tragic.

For most of these mothers, and the children in their homes, our white women are the only chance for better things. This is also true in the North, where, especially since the exodus, white women have now a chance for this Christian and patriotic service. But we of the South have the right of leadership in this matter, and the signs that it will be exercised are not wanting. The women of Arkansas, of Mississippi, of Baltimore, the women of the various home mission bodies, of the W. C. T. U., and the Y. W. C. A., and of local clubs and societies in every state, are opening doors of service to these isolated, unprivileged women, and guiding them in ways they need to learn.

In a Tennessee town, where one of the officers of the National Association spoke, a number of the white teachers went to hear her to learn what the colored women were doing, that they might help them.

A Texas judge said recently to the writer that one of the greatest needs in race adjustment was for white teachers to go to colored teachers' meetings and help to strengthen their interest in the moral, hygienic, and industrial development of their pupils, both in school and in home life. The Southern Teachers' Association, a few years ago, went on record as



believing in the necessity for Southern white teachers in colored normal schools. For fifty years the Southern Methodist Church, at its General Conferences, has officially received fraternal delegates from colored Methodism, and has appointed its delegates to visit them in return. Colored men and women are introduced and speak at many of the official gatherings of Southern Presbyterian and Southern Methodist missionary women, and white women of the churches and of the clubs speak in colored women's meetings when asked.

Would it not be well for the club organizations to recognize officially the need for these points of communication between the women of the two races? At a meeting of the Arkansas Federation seats were reserved in a gallery for colored club women, who not only came and were helped, but whose interest stimulated the white women to helpful coöperation in many places. The policy of the Baltimore Civic League toward the Coöperative Civic League might be equally useful in other places, and in the state organizations also.

### Coöperation in War Times.

The war is accelerating the trend toward coöperation. The need for food conservation, for the multiplied services of women, is widening the human platform on which the races can meet. The war work of the president of the last National Biennial, one of the most distinguished women of the South, is typical of what thousands of women are doing on a smaller scale. In response to a call from the State of Texas she gave her entire time, for many weeks, to a State-wide campaign for food production and conservation, speaking several times a day to large audiences of white and colored people. She told the writer that in every place she impressed upon the women who took charge of the local work the necessity for carrying it on, in all its phases, among both races.

The Red Cross is being organized among the colored people throughout the South, the leaders in the work being the white club women. In Atlanta, where preparations for a great base



hospital go forward, the club women set a day for a linen shower for it; and, under the guidance of the president of the State Federation, the colored women were asked to observe the day, which they did, taking a generous part in the common service.

This has been the theory of the women in every state, in almost every county; and though frequently but imperfectly carried out, the main effort being to enlist and educate white women, yet the fact remains that the Great War is bringing to all our women what before was given to only a few—a consciousness of spheres of action and responsibility in which the bond of a common humanity takes precedence of the bond of race.

Not that race consciousness is weakened; that would mean disaster to white and to black. What the war is bringing us is a realization of the inseparableness of the interests of the two races in economic life and in all that makes for the moral and physical health of our communities. This understanding, not by the few, but by the masses, is a necessary part of the process by which the mists of prejudice will be lifted and the true lines of racial demarcation will stand clear and immovable in the light of conscience and common sense.

### **A Question of Womanhood.**

The facts herein given, the trend of the movements recorded, tend toward one end: the recognition of womanhood as a thing deeper even than race, a thing for all women to protect. The full recognition of this truth will do more to settle "the race question" than all other things combined, for all other things needed will come out of it—full racial justice, true racial separateness, full human coöperation and respect. The status of the Negro woman and the Negro home in the minds of the privileged white women will determine the status of the race. Among all races, in all times, it has been the lot of the women to bear the unbearable things. As they have won respect and protection the race has climbed toward free-

dom and self-control. There is no way to raise the Negroes except by this world-old process, and no one can set it in motion as can our Southern white women.

It is time for us to take stock of our responsibilities. Not long ago the writer heard a trivial, yet most serious, aspect of the matter put by a Southern Methodist presiding elder.

"You white women," he said, "are the main obstacle to Negro morality. You teach us men, and your children—your sons—that morality in a Negro woman is beneath a white person's notice."

"What do you mean?" a hearer demanded indignantly.

"This: Social distinctions, which we all know are established forever, like the mountains—know it so well that it is a waste of breath ever to say it—are forever being confused in your thoughts with distinctions in justice and in law. This class of distinctions must be abolished, for the sake of our own civilization, if for nothing else. For instance: You refuse to give a Negro wife her legal title of 'Mrs.' It's not a social matter, as so many think; it's a legal right, defining a legal status fundamentally necessary to civilization. But you Christian women refuse it to women sufficiently handicapped, heaven knows, without this added difficulty. I'm not talking about your cooks; in the kitchen a woman of no race would expect the use of her legal title; but you refuse it to the race. You make no distinction between the Christian wife and the mother of half-a-dozen haphazard mulattoes; they're all 'Sally' to you. You say, in effect, that morality in a Negro doesn't count. You teach your sons that from babyhood. The Negro women pay for it; but by God's law your sons pay, too—pay a debt more yours than theirs. And the daughters they marry pay, too."

A few years ago Dr. John R. Mott called in Atlanta a Christian Student Conference for colored students. Five hundred of them came, from eighteen states. Seventy white people, men and women, mostly Southern, were also present—bishops, missionary secretaries, Y. M. and Y. W. C. A. folk,

college presidents, teachers, and people interested in Christian work. Among the addresses was one by A. M. Trawick, a Southern man and a secretary of the International Y. M. C. A., on the rights of the Negro woman and the Negro home. In an informal after-meeting for women a colored woman spoke. She was known to some of the white women present for her service to her people, and especially for her efforts to shield the girls of her race. She confessed her long hatred of white men; and, beyond them, her hate and bitterness toward white women for their scornful indifference toward a matter so tragically vital to the welfare and honor of both races. Her sense of wrong, her anguish and shame, her fierce contempt for white religion scorched her white hearers like flame.

"And to-day," she said, controlling with great effort her shaken voice, "there was a miracle! A white man—a *white man!*—stood up, not just before Negroes, but before white people, *before white women*, and said that colored women should have protection and respect. It didn't seem possible. That I should have lived to——" Tears choked her. She stood shaking with emotion, tears pouring down her face, her drenched eyes fixed on the little group of Southern white women, from whom she apparently asked nothing, and expected less.

Is it not time for the increasing body of our women who care for the womanhood of all races to make their attitude known? To stand openly, and together, for the protection of these women and their homes?

### **"The Forward Look."**

One of the first steps necessary in this protection is to bury the Old Black Mammy. She may still be loved and honored. Her being dead is no bar to affection; but it certainly should bar a daily association with her corpse which threatens the corruption of sentiment into sentimentality. Wrenched from a past environment to which alone she belonged, and set up,

fetish-like, in a life in which she can have no rightful place, she expresses an attitude of the white mind which is at once ludicrous, tragic, and fraught with future peril.

We must face the future, not the past. Yet scores of thousands of Southern folk, seriously and kindly considering the Negro problem, will insist upon the South's friendliness to the Negroes, and offer as proof, not efforts being made to meet their present needs, but the touching and universal cult of the Old Black Mammy!

She deserves a funeral, bless her; and she certainly needs one—a competent, permanent funeral that will not have to be done over again every few days. Her removal will clear the atmosphere and enable us to see the old soul's granddaughters, to whom we must in justice pay something of the debt we so freely acknowledge to her. We must lay aside the mental attitude of the past—the attitude of a people toward a slave race—and face the present with a forward look. To accomplish this is the task of women, and by all the tokens they are accepting it as theirs. They have begun in this territory, as here shown, that spiritual pioneering which is their chief, though by no means their only, public function. And in exploring these untried paths in a changed world they are once again discovering that immemorial country in which, through all the ages, human souls have been working out, in finer ideals of righteousness and of service, a better justice for the Race of Man.

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